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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - PRESIDENT BUSH IN EUROPE
PARIS - FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

PRESIDENT BUSH IN EUROPE

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

THE POPE'S HEALTH AND THE ON-GOING HOUSING SCANDAL CONCERNING FRENCH FINANCE MINISTER HERVE GAYMARD, DOMINATE HEADLINES TODAY. PRESIDENT BUSH'S EUROPEAN TRIP CONTINUES TO RECEIVE HEADLINE AND EDITORIAL COVERAGE.

A POSITIVE, BUT UNRELATED STORY IS CATHOLIC LA CROIX'S HEADLINE AND TWO-PAGE REPORT: "TWO MONTHS AFTER THE TSUNAMI, ASIA IS COMING TO LIFE AGAIN" WITH AN ARTICLE PRAISING THE FACT THAT THE U.S. AND JAPAN ARE PROVIDING THE COUNTRIES THAT WERE HIT BY THE TSUNAMI WITH EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR TIDAL WAVES.

TWO LEADING FRENCH DAILIES, RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO AND LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION TAKE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS BUSH AND PUTIN AND FOCUS ON PRESIDENT BUSH'S PROVIDING PUTIN WITH A LESSON IN DEMOCRACY. LIBERATION CALLED THE MEETING A "HEATED CONFRONTATION" WITH A VLADIMIR PUTIN "VISIBLY TENSE." BY CONTRAST, LE FIGARO IMPLIED THAT PRESIDENT BUSH FOUND HIMSELF "PLACED IN A POSITION WHERE HE WAS FORCED TO JUSTIFY AMERICAN DEMOCRACY." COMMENTARIES IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, AGREED THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS HAS CHILLED CONSIDERABLY DESPITE EFFORTS TO "MAINTAIN THE ILLUSION" OF AGREEMENT. (LE FIGARO) A NUMBER OF REGIONAL DAILIES DEVOTE THEIR EDITORIALS TO THIS MEETING AND RUSSO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. (SEE PART C)

ALBERT ROHAN, FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE AUSTRIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PENS AN OP-ED IN ECONOMIC RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS ENTITLED: "EUROPE AND BUSH: AN IMPOSSIBLE LOVE STORY." "EUROPEANS DO NOT WANT EXPLANATIONS, THEY WANT TO BE CONSULTED, THEY WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE AMERICAN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND BE ASSURED THAT THEIR POSITION IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT CONCERNING AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY."

EDITORIALIST FOR LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION, PATRICK SABATIER, COMPARES PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO EUROPE TO THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA BY CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS IN 1492: "2005 WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE YEAR BUSH DISCOVERED EUROPE. THE MOST IMPORTANT FACET OF THE VOYAGE OF AIR FORCE ONE, LIKE THE SANTA MARIA, IS THAT IT TOOK PLACE." (SEE PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

PRESIDENT BUSH TO EUROPE

"D ENTE"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (02/25): "BUSH SEEMS TO HAVE REALIZED THAT TO TRY AND THWART THE EMERGENCE OF THE EU AS A WORLD POWER IS A DANGEROUS GAME THAT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE IF HE FAILED, AS HE SURELY WOULD. THE NEW WORLD WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH AN OLD CONTINENT THAT IS REVAMPED AND HAS BECOME ITS EQUAL, EXCEPT MILITARILY, IN ORDER TO MAKE IT INTO A PARTNER AND NOT A RIVAL. EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS SHARE THE SAME VALUES OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM. BUT EUROPEANS DO NOT SHARE THE ZEALOUSNESS OF BUSH IN HIS CRUSADE FOR DEMOCRACY. THIS IS WHY THE U.S. AND THE EU HAVE DIFFERENT APPROACHES ON VARIOUS SENSITIVE ISSUES FROM IRAN TO CHINA AND EVEN RUSSIA. ON THIS LAST ISSUE THE EUROPEANS WOULD DO WELL TO APPLAUD BUSH'S INITIATIVE TO REMIND PUTIN OF THE FUNDAMENTALS OF DEMOCRACY."

"THE QUARREL WITH EUROPE IS OVER"

VERONIQUE SOULE IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES WHERE DISAGREEMENTS PERSIST BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE EU AND WRITES (02/25): "IF GEORGE BUSH'S GOAL IN COMING TO EUROPE WAS TO TURN THE PAGE ON THE QUARREL OVER IRAQ, HE HAS SUCCEEDED. IF HIS INTENTION WAS TO CONVINCE EUROPEANS TO ADHERE TO HIS VISION OF THE WORLD, HE HAS FAILED."

"BUSH AND EUROPE"

IVAN RIOUFOL IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (02/25): "ARE THE U.S. AND EUROPE ON THE SAME WAVE LENGTH? THE IMPRESSION THAT IS LEFT AFTER GEORGE W. BUSH'S VISIT TO EUROPE THIS WEEK IS MISLEADING. WHEN AMERICANS TALK OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM AS THE COMMON ENEMY. EUROPEANS, SUPPORTERS OF A BRAND OF 'SOFT-POWER,' DO NOT UNDERSTAND. EVEN IF THE U.S. ACKNOWLEDGES THE EU'S RIGHT TO EXIST, THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT SHOULD CHANGE POLITICS, WHICH SO FAR HAVE PAID OFF RATHER WELL DESPITE FRENCH CRITICISM CONCERNING A DESTABILIZATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST."

"EUROPE MAKES ITS WAY. WITH BUSH"

JEAN-CLAUDE KIEFER SIGNS AN EDITORIAL IN REGIONAL LES DERNIERES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE (02/25): "'REALPOLITIK' DOMINATES THE RELATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW. [WHERE] A FEW LOW BLOWS ARE ALLOWED. MOSCOW SELLS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO IRAN AND ARMS TO SYRIA, WHILE PRESIDENT BUSH ENCOURAGES THE BYELORUSSIANS TO GET RID OF THEIR DICTATOR. AND WHILE THIS IS SCARCELY APPRECIATED BY THE KREMLIN IT IS TOLERATED. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE IS DIFFERENT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN PASSIONATE. BUT REALISM IS GAINING SWAY. THE DAYS OF CONDESCENSION ARE OVER. EUROPE IS A COMPETITIVE ECONOMIC POWER AND VIEWED AS SUCH ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC. LESS EMOTION, WITHOUT THE CYNICISM THAT MARKS THE WASHINGTON-MOSCOW ENTENTE, THIS IS WHAT 'OLD EUROPE' EXPECTS FROM THE U.S.. THIS IS [THE DIRECTION THAT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IS TAKING]. FROM TRIUMPHANT UNILATERALISM TO CONTROLLED 'MULTILATERALISM.' FOR PARIS AND BERLIN, THIS IS A REAL STEP FORWARD."

"RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE"

PIERRE FREHAL IN REGIONAL LE REPUBLICAIN LORAIN (02/25): "RUSSIA AND THE U.S. MAY SHARE THE VIEW THAT IRAN SHOULD NOT HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT THIS DID NOT STOP PUTIN FROM SIGNING AN AGREEMENT WITH TEHERAN TO DEVELOP ITS CIVILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM. THIS IS HOW MOSCOW AFFIRMS ITS INDEPENDENCE. AND BEHIND THIS AFFIRMATION IS RUSSIA'S DESIRE TO PROVE THE SCOPE OF ITS INFLUENCE AND THE LIMITS OF THE EURO-ATLANTIC WORLD'S INFLUENCE IN A REGION THAT IT CONSIDERS TO BE ITS OWN. AFTER GEORGIA AND UKRAINE, RUSSIA HAS NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING OTHER EX-SOVIET REPUBLICS TO GO WEST."
WOLFF